

Rabies Policies and Procedures***(518) 474-3186******(518) 465-9720 (after hours)******SUBJECT: Model State Program for Management of Livestock in Rabies Enzootic Areas***

1. Rabies vaccines are licensed for cattle, horses, and sheep. Annual revaccination is required to maintain a current vaccination status (except for sheep that receive a booster vaccination with a three year vaccine after having received a primary vaccination).
2. Vaccination of all livestock may not be economically feasible or justified from a public health standpoint. However, vaccination should be considered for:
 - a. Vaccination of valuable livestock in rabies enzootic areas.
 - b. Livestock housed in structures with roosting bats or frequented by bats.
 - c. Livestock with frequent contact with humans.
3. Livestock in contact with general public (e.g., fairs, petting zoos, shows, farm tours) should be vaccinated:
 - a. All species for which a USDA licensed vaccine is available must be accompanied by a veterinary certification of current immunization for rabies, as defined in the applicable passage of the New York State Sanitary Code* : “current vaccination shall mean the injection of a rabies vaccine suitable to the species, which meets the standards prescribed by the United States Department of Agriculture for interstate sale and is administered according to the manufacturer’s instructions under the direction of a duly licensed veterinarian not later than the expiration date on the package. Current vaccination shall begin 14 days following primary vaccination, and continue for the period stated in the manufacturer’s instructions.”
 - b. It is strongly recommended that all mammals to be exhibited at a fair or similar exhibition in NYS be vaccinated annually for rabies no less than 14 days prior to arrival at the fair grounds. While the New York State Interdepartmental Rabies Committee recognizes the safety and probable efficacy of licensed rabies vaccines for use off-label in other mammals, it is important to note: (1) efficacy of the vaccine in off-label species has not been established, and it must be assumed that vaccine failure may occur; (2) in compliance with the terms of the State Sanitary Code, a mammal vaccinated by off-label use will be treated as an unvaccinated animal if it is exposed to rabies or if it bites or otherwise potentially exposes a human to rabies.
 - c. Small mammals such as hamsters, gerbils, rats and rabbits may alternatively be isolated from any direct contact with the public.
 - d. Unvaccinated and off-label vaccinated mammals should be restricted from certain activities at fairs and similar settings that encourage intimate contact with the public (e.g., petting zoo’s, on-leash walks through general pedestrian areas).
 - e. For off-label vaccinated mammals, public contact may be allowed if the animals are kept under surveillance for rabies symptoms and if contacts are limited to a small, defined number of animals which have been vaccinated at least two months prior to contact. In addition, a register of those having contact must be maintained with names, addresses, and phone numbers, in order to quickly identify those possibly needing rabies treatment if the animal develops symptoms.

* New York State Sanitary Code, Chapter 10, Health, Part 2 - Section 2.14 para. (a) 4.

4. All suspected cases of rabies in animals, and animal bites to humans must immediately be reported to the local health authority. When appropriate the health authority will arrange ten day observation or rabies examination of the biting animal.
5. Unvaccinated and off-label vaccinated mammals (including livestock) in contact with a rabid animal must be destroyed unless quarantined for a 6 month period. Animals currently vaccinated (as defined in 3.a., above) in contact with a rabid animal must receive a rabies booster injection within 5 days of the exposure. Quarantine on a farm for livestock means isolation from other domestic animals and from all humans except for the person caring for the animal. NYS Ag & Markets veterinarians should be consulted for on-site advice on setting up the quarantines.
6. When rabies is confirmed in a domestic animal on a farm, it is not necessary to consider all animals in the herd as exposed, as horizontal transfer (e.g., cow to cow) is unlikely. However, any mammal known to be bitten by or otherwise exposed to the saliva of the rabid animal must be managed as in 5 (above). Furthermore, because another member of the herd may have been exposed to rabies through the same carrier that infected the rabid domestic animal, other members of the herd must be watched carefully for development of signs of rabies, and isolated immediately should that occur. Milk from the remainder of the herd may be sold. Rabies virus has not been demonstrated in infectious doses in milk. Pasteurization will inactivate rabies virus.
7. The meat from an animal exposed to rabies (i.e., known to be bitten by a rabid animal) may be eaten without risk of rabies providing the animal is slaughtered within 7 days of exposure to rabies and liberal portions of the exposed area are discarded. Milk from an animal in quarantine may be used if pasteurized. Neither meat nor milk from a rabid animal (i.e., became ill with or died from the disease) should be used for human or animal consumption.
8. Veterinarians, their staff, and livestock owners in rabies enzootic areas should immediately suspect rabies when animals become ill or demonstrate abnormal behavior. Promptly isolate the animal. Protective rubber gloves should be worn when handling and medicating sick animals, especially animals suspected of choking, as this is frequently an early sign of rabies.
9. Barns, fences, and other barriers to sick wildlife should be maintained in good repair. Doors should be kept closed whenever possible, especially at night.
10. Dogs and cats are required to be currently vaccinated for rabies at all times. Barn cats should be vaccinated and controlled (rabies is 5 to 10 times more prevalent in cats than in dogs in areas affected by the raccoon rabies outbreak).
11. Veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and others in intimate contact with sick livestock in rabies enzootic areas should receive rabies pre-exposure immunization. Care must be taken while treating and during necropsy of rabies-suspect animals. Protective clothing should include rubber gloves, surgical mask and face shield or other eye protection.
12. Specimens for diagnosis of rabies in livestock must include refrigerated (not fixed) samples of brainstem and cerebellum.